

Week Ending Friday, May 23, 1997

**Remarks Prior to Discussions With  
President Leonid Kuchma of  
Ukraine and an Exchange With  
Reporters**

*May 16, 1997*

**President Clinton.** Let me say I'm delighted to have President Kuchma back at the White House. He and the Vice President have worked hard today. They've made a lot of progress on economic issues and on security issues, and I'm quite encouraged by the report I have received and quite hopeful about our future partnership with Ukraine and Ukraine's role in a united, democratic Europe.

**NATO**

**Q.** President Kuchma, are you interested in having Ukraine join NATO as a formal member?

**President Kuchma.** First of all, I understand the situation nowadays in Europe, and I'm well aware of the configuration of political forces. And I understand that Ukrainian application to NATO would not be timely, though Ukraine has proclaimed its aim to integrate with European and transatlantic structures.

**Q.** President Clinton, President Yeltsin seems to have a pretty different interpretation of the charter, the NATO charter with Russia, than what was described here. Is that the way you read what he's been saying and his advisers have been saying?

**President Clinton.** I think that the agreement is clear and will be clear from the details as they're published. And I also believe it's a good agreement for NATO and a good agreement for Russia. And let me further say I hope now that the Russian Duma will proceed to ratify START II because it's very much in Russia's interest as well as the United States and in the interest of world peace. It will enable us to go on to START III, which will reduce the nuclear arsenals 80

percent from their cold war high and relieve Russia of an enormous financial burden while maintaining its strategic interests.

*[At this point, one group of reporters left the room, and another group entered.]*

**President Clinton.** I am delighted to have President Kuchma back in the White House. The United States values its partnership with Ukraine and believes that we cannot have a successful, undivided, democratic Europe without a successful, democratic, progressive Ukraine. And I appreciate the hard work that President Kuchma and Vice President Gore have done in their commission all day and the results they have achieved, which they will announce, I think, at a press conference.

**President Kuchma.** It was a pleasure for me to hear the words by President Clinton, that European security is impossible without a prosperous Ukraine and an independent Ukraine. In fact, this was the thrust, the direction of the efforts of the Vice President and my efforts. And I should say that we spared no efforts.

**Summit of the Eight**

**Q.** How do you think—will Ukraine take part in the discussion of the Chernobyl issue in the summit of G-7 in Denver in some form—maybe in a conference, in another form?

**Vice President Gore.** It will be a subject of discussion among the eight.

**President Clinton.** I don't know the answer to that, I'm sorry to say, but I know that it will be a subject of our discussions because all of the seven have made clear their commitment for years to helping Ukraine to come to grips with Chernobyl and the aftermath and making sure that consequences can be dealt with and also that the country has the supplies necessary and energy to grow and to prosper.

## NATO

**Q.** Mr. President, aren't there reasons to fear that Ukraine might fear that a NATO-Russian agreement might divide Europe into spheres of influence?

**President Clinton.** No, quite the contrary. The argument that I made to President Yeltsin when we met at Helsinki was that we had to create a united Europe and that we should not view the mission of NATO in the future as we viewed the mission of NATO in the past. We have to create a world in the 21st century where people do not define their greatness by their ability to dominate their neighbors but instead define their greatness by their ability to maximize the achievements of their own citizens and band together with others to defeat common problems, like terrorism and weapons proliferation.

Your can see that in the partnership that NATO has had with both Ukraine and Russia in Bosnia. All people who want to be free and who want their neighbors to be free have an interest in banding together to fight problems like that.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:34 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

## The President's Radio Address

*May 17, 1997*

Good morning. This morning, I want to talk about our new balanced budget agreement and the way it expands opportunity through education, so that we can keep the American dream alive for all our children. When I took office 4½ years ago, America faced growing deficits as far as the eye could see. It was a time of economic stagnation and high unemployment, in spite of the fact that our businesses and working people had done so much to compete in the global economy.

We moved quickly back then to put in place a new policy, a policy of invest and grow, cutting the deficit, investing in our people, opening new markets around the world through tough trade agreements. The results of that strategy are now clear: We've

had 12 million new jobs, the highest economic growth in a decade, the lowest unemployment in 24 years, the lowest inflation in 30 years, the largest decline in income inequality since the 1960's, and the deficit has already been cut by 77 percent, from \$290 billion a year when I took office, to \$67 billion this year.

We proved that we could make the tough decisions to put our fiscal house in order and still protect America's values, especially through education. While we were cutting that deficit by 77 percent, we were expanding Head Start, supporting States and schools and raising academic standards, increasing scholarships and student loans, and lowering the cost of repaying back those loans.

To keep our economy strong, we have to keep that strategy in place and finish the job. That's why I'm so proud that we've reached a bipartisan agreement to balance the Federal budget for the first time since 1969, when President Johnson was in the White House. Thanks to leaders in Congress in both parties who led the way, along with my negotiators, we have crafted an historic accord.

What is truly important about this budget agreement is not just what it does on the spreadsheet but what it does for our families and our futures. It brings the deficit down to zero over the next 5 years while reflecting our values and preparing our people for the 21st century: preserving and protecting Medicare and Medicaid; extending the Medicare Trust Fund for at least a decade without steep premium increases; expanding health care coverage to 5 million children who don't have it today; protecting our environment, including cleaning up 500 of our most dangerous toxic waste dumps, and going forward with our project to preserve and restore the Florida Everglades; helping move people from welfare to work with tax incentives to businesses to hire people from welfare and support for community service jobs in those areas with high unemployment; providing tax relief for parents to raise their children and send their children or themselves to college; restoring unfair cuts in support for legal immigrants who come here lawfully in search of the American dream.

All of those values are important. But to me, the heart of this balanced budget agree-